

15 September 1944

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Ex 2277

353 South

HISTORY PROJECT, OSS

TO:

FROM: Director of the History Project

General Donovan and the History Projects Committee are eager to secure a complete and well documented history of the OSS at a reasonably early date. Some idea of the importance and urgency which they attach to the Project may be realized by reading the Special Order #79 and Special Order 79, Supplement I, of 25 July and 26 August 1944, respectively.

Prominent among the reasons for writing such a history are:

1. The fact that it is desirable to prepare the record of so important a war-waging agency while the men who have operated it are still available, their memories still fresh, and the records still readily accessible. With the end of the war, much of the personnel will inevitably become widely scattered and records may become difficult of access.
2. The urgent needs, which OSS was created to meet, will in all probability arise again. An adequate record of OSS will be of enormous value to those who follow after us and who have to face the same or analogous problems.

Attached herewith is a Suggested Outline for the Preparation of Branch Histories of OSS. In addition, questions which no doubt will occur to you include:

I. Length of the Branch History

No definite length has been assigned either to the over-all history or to the several histories of the component Branches. The length of Branch histories will of course vary with the size and relative importance of the several branches, and the matter of the exact length can easily be straightened out between the Director and yourself when you both become more familiar with the material. In general, it will be understood that, in order to secure stylistic uniformity, what you write may be revised and may in part be rewritten by the editorial staff. It is more important for you to supply sound content than to labor over perfection of form. When you make generalizations, illustrate them whenever possible with specific examples. It is better to write too much than too little.

II. Deadlines

It is expected that your manuscript, if it deals with the history of one of the smaller branches, will be in the hands of the editor not later than 1 November 1944. The histories of the remaining Branches will be due not later than 1 January 1945.

III. Scope of History.

The story is to be carried down to 1 September 1944. Activities beyond that date will be the subject of supplementary

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volumes. In connection with the supplementary volumes, you should take steps at once to inaugurate in your Branch a daily record of all important conferences, decisions, contacts, operations, changes in organization, and changes in personnel. An appraisal of the performance of personnel leaving your Branch, prepared by a competent judge, should be included in this daily record.

IV. Documentation

All statements of fact should be supported by a footnote indicating the source of information. The source should be indicated in sufficient detail to enable the editorial board to check your reference. In the case of information secured by word of mouth, the person giving the information and the date should be noted. In general it is desirable, when information is secured from persons available in Washington, to have them check the statements in your text which you ascribe to them.

V. Security

The manuscript you write will be classified SECRET, or, when the situation demands it, TOP SECRET. It will not be published or distributed. It is intended for General Donovan and such high officials as he may elect. You are expected to be absolutely unrestricted in your use of Top Secret material. The only type of material which will be withheld from you is that dealing with future secret ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ operations. If you have any difficulty in eliciting from any source information which seems to you pertinent, you will please notify the Project Director.

VI. Project Personnel

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The History Project is under the direction of [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] with [REDACTED] (of FN) and [REDACTED] (of the
Planning Staff) as associates. It is operating under the
oversight of the History Project Committee, as follows:

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[REDACTED], Executive Office,
Chairman of the

VII. Headquarters

Room 353 South Building, telephone extension 2277.